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CAP YI Summative Evaluation Study

Final Report

Audit and Evaluation Branch

March 31 2003

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NOTE:

Minor editorial changes were made to this report in order to prepare the document for posting to the Internet (including removal of standard Appendices such as list of interviewees and questionnaires). Readers wishing to receive a copy of the original version of this report should contact the Audit and Evaluation Branch at Industry Canada.

Executive Summary

Industry Canada engaged KPMG Consulting to conduct a summative evaluation study of the Community Access Program Youth Initiative (CAP YI). The summative evaluation was undertaken in order to obtain program results and identify program improvements. The key steps in this evaluation were the analysis of the youth exit surveys and the delivery agent's status reports, and interviews with CAP YI personnel and delivery agents.

The findings of this study are presented under the four evaluation issues: need for the CAP YI Program, appropriateness of the CAP YI structure and delivery, results achieved by the CAP YI Program, and suggested improvements to the CAP YI.

Evaluation Issue #1: Need for the CAP YI Program

- No comparable youth initiative program(s) within the provinces/territories.
- Youth are acquiring relevant work experience.
- CAP YI succeeds in contributing to Industry Canada's objectives under the Connectedness Agenda.
- CAP sites are benefiting from the additional resources that helps them to better serve their community base.
- Meaningful job opportunities are made available within remote/rural communities.

Evaluation Issue #2: Appropriateness of the CAP YI structure and delivery

- Recently, service contracts with delivery agents have been replaced with contribution agreements.
- Some delivery agents receive matching funds that enable them to continue with the program even when Industry Canada funding is delayed.
- Industry Canada has not been effective at rolling out the program in a timely manner.
 - *Delays in funding affect the credibility of the delivery agents tasked with delivering the program.*
 - *Some delivery agents are considering no longer delivering the program.*
 - *Many youth miss out on the opportunity to apply to the CAP YI program given its late roll-out.*
 - *Many CAP sites are unable to secure youth during the summer period.*
- Delivery agents are successful at ensuring program awareness among CAP sites.
- The main tracking/monitoring tool has not been operational for 2 years.

- Youth exit data are unreliable.
- Industry Canada is considered flexible in allowing delivery agents to interpret selection criteria.
- Limited communication is provided by Industry Canada to delivery agents.
- Industry Canada has limited awareness of what is happening in the field.

Evaluation Issue #3: Results achieved by the CAP YI Program

Overall, it would appear that the CAP YI has been successful at meeting its objectives under the Connectedness Agenda and Youth Employment Strategy.

- The CAP YI program is successfully providing youth with work experience that facilitates transition to the labour market.
- Delivery agents are effectively delivering the program within their province.
- CAP sites are provided with a dedicated resource.

Evaluation Issue #4: Suggested Improvements for the CAP YI Program

- Timely process is required in the delivery of funds.
- Delivery agents should meet to share lessons learned or best practices.
- More communication from Industry Canada to delivery agents.
- Youth and Delivery agents reports need to be reviewed.
- Option of longer work terms – 6 months rather than 12 weeks.

Youth Exit Summary Report

A key element in this study was the analysis of the Youth exit surveys. Challenges arose in obtaining the data for the last three fiscal years. In fact, the consulting team was unable to use the data from the FY00/01 as it was corrupt. For the two years that were available (FY99/00 and 01/02) there were difficulties with duplicate entries, as well the data required significant ‘cleaning’ as there were no screening mechanisms in place (e.g., a respondent could enter more than one response when the question should have allowed for only one). Eventually, the consulting team was able to ‘clean’ the data, and the key findings from the analysis of these surveys are as follows:

- Many respondents had noted that the program has contributed to their acquiring Internet, technical and HTML/web page design related skills.

- The program has also been credited with assisting those respondents who successfully found employment after their internship with finding their current job. Approximately two-thirds (67.9%) of S&T respondents and 56.4% of Student respondents indicated that the CAP YI program helped them find a job.
- Respondents have also indicated acquiring general skills including: oral communication, interpersonal & teamwork, organizational, creative thinking, and decision-making skills.
- For FY 01/02, approximately 82.7% of S&T youth and 93.1% of Student youth agree that the CAP YI program has contributed to their career development.
- 56.6% of S&T youth and 51.4% of Student youth indicated that the CAP YI program has influenced their career path.

1.0 Introduction

KPMG Consulting was engaged by Industry Canada to conduct a summative evaluation study of the Community Access Program Youth Initiative (CAP YI). The summative evaluation was undertaken in order to obtain program results and identify program improvements.

The four main issues that were evaluated in this evaluation were as follows:

1. **The extent to which there is a need for CAP YI**—Is there a need for the federal government to invest in the CAP YI program? How does CAP YI contribute to Industry Canada's mission and objectives under the Connectedness Agenda and Youth Employment Strategy? Is the CAP YI complementary to any other youth program? Is there a need for the program among target groups, such as aboriginals, seniors, and remote communities.
2. **The extent to which the CAP YI structure and delivery is appropriate**—Is the program structure an effective way of meeting the objectives of CAP YI? How are delivery agents and employers delivering the internships in the regions? Is the program responsive to the needs of Industry Canada? How are employers and interns selected?
3. **The results (intended and unintended) that have been achieved by CAP YI**—Have CAP YI objectives been met? What factors have facilitated/impeded the achievement of CAP YI objectives? How satisfied are the various parties (e.g., delivery agents, employers) with the program? What are the program impacts on delivery agents, employers, youth and communities?
4. **The lessons learned and how CAP YI can be improved**—What are the needs/future needs of employers, youth and communities regarding ITC? What are the program strengths and weaknesses?

2.0 Program Description

The Community Access Program (CAP) is one of the first Canada on-line programs to be launched, and it is a part of the Government of Canada's agenda to Connect Canadians. The Community Access Program (CAP) Youth Initiative (YI) is coordinated by Industry Canada's CAP and is funded through Human Resources Development Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES). CAP YI aims to provide employment opportunities for young Canadians between the ages of 15 and 30 with work experience that will facilitate the transition to the labour market. Since its inception in 1996, CAP YI has provided employment opportunities to approximately 7,000 young Canadians throughout Canada, helping individuals, community organizations and small businesses improve their knowledge and effective use of the Internet, and related information technologies. Specific activities undertaken by youth participants include:

- Assisting CAP site users/public.
- Delivering Internet training sessions.
- Researching and developing Web sites.
- Drafting publicity materials.
- Organizing information fairs and special events.
- Providing technical support to the CAP site.

The CAP Youth Initiative incorporates two streams:

1. Student Stream—provides employment to youth interns who were in school full-time and who are planning to return to school full-time after the internship.
2. Science and Technology Stream (S&T)—provides employment to non-students between the ages of 15 to 30 that are recent graduates, underemployed, or unemployed.

CAP YI is administered by a different body within each province and territory. There are a total of 14 delivery agencies (one for each province and territory, except for Nunavut which has two delivery agencies). The 14 delivery agencies are as follows:

- Carlton Trail Regional College, Saskatchewan.
- Junior Achievement of Manitoba, Manitoba.
- Community Futures Development Association of British Columbia, British Columbia.
- Nova Scotia Technology & Science Secretariat, Nova Scotia.
- CNL CAP, Newfoundland.
- Connect New Brunswick Branche, New Brunswick.
- Nunavut Youth Consulting, Nunavut.
- Nuluaq Community Internet Access Society, Nunavut.
- South Slave Research Centre, North West Territories.
- Yukon College, Yukon.
- Ontario Library Association, Ontario.

- Réseau des SADC du Québec, Québec.
- Technology PEI, Prince Edward Island.
- Community Futures Network Society of Alberta.

3.0 Methodology/Approach

As discussed in section 1.0, there are four broad areas that were explored in this evaluation of the Community Access Program Youth Initiative (CAP YI), and they include:

1. The extent that there is there a need for CAP YI?
2. The extent that the CAP YI structure and delivery is appropriate?
3. What results have been achieved by CAP YI?
4. What have been the lessons learned and how can CAP YI be improved?

In order to address the above areas of evaluation, the following steps were undertaken: completion of a student summary report; completion of a delivery agent summary report; development of interview guides, and completion of stakeholder interviews.

3.1 Student summary reports

Following the completion of their internship, exit surveys were completed by youth participants from the Student and S&T Stream. The survey instrument administered to youth participants can be found in Appendix A. The summary report of these findings is presented in Appendix B.

The first step in this evaluation was the completion of this summary report. Challenges arose in obtaining the data for the last three fiscal years. In fact, the consulting team was unable to use the data from the FY00/01 as it was corrupt. For the two years that were available (FY99/00 and 01/02) there were difficulties with duplicate entries, as well the data required significant ‘cleaning’ as there were no screening mechanisms in place (e.g., a respondent could enter more than one response when the question should have allowed for only one). As well, the program could not accurately identify which youth fell under the Student stream and which fell under the S&T stream. Consequently, initial reports produced by the program regarding youth results were inaccurate.

The youth data for FY 99/00 and 01/02 was ‘cleaned’ by the consulting team and provided to Industry Canada. All duplicate entries were eliminated, and where more than one response was provided to a question for which only one response is permitted, the most appropriate response was selected.

3.2 Delivery agent summary reports

Each delivery agent submits quarterly status reports. These reports have been reviewed and analyzed. A summary of the status reports from FY 99/00 to FY 01/02 is presented in Appendix C. Caution should be taken in interpreting these findings, as some of the data reported in these status reports are not consistent and therefore difficult to interpret.

3.3 Data collection instruments

The following interview guides were developed and are presented in Appendix D: delivery agent, and stakeholder.

Surveys have also been developed for CAP site users and participating/non-participating employers. (Employers can either be the delivery agent or a CAP site). These survey instruments have been developed, and are to be administered by the CAP YI program.

3.4 Interviews with stakeholders and delivery agents

Interviews were conducted with four representatives of CAP YI, and twelve delivery agents.

4.0 Study Findings

This chapter presents the overall study findings of the CAP YI Program presented by the key study areas.

4.1 Need for the CAP YI Program

- **No comparable youth initiative program(s) within the provinces/territories.** The CAP YI Program appears unique within each province. While there is a myriad of employment programs that exist, delivery agents have noted that there is no comparable program that provides youth with technology related work internships.
- **Youth are acquiring relevant work experience.** CAP YI succeeds in contributing to Industry Canada's objectives under the Youth Employment Strategy. The initiative provides youth with relevant work experience. According to the delivery agents, youth are able to further their skills development (both technical and soft skills). The skills that youth acquire during their internship are of value when seeking other employment. In fact, analysis of the youth exit survey reveals that many respondents believed their experience with the program helped them find their current job.
- **CAP YI succeeds in contributing to Industry Canada's objectives under the Connectedness Agenda.** By providing CAP sites with skilled youth, the CAP YI program assists in providing Canadians with access to the Internet. As part of the CAP YI program, youth provide training courses on how to use the Internet to users, assist small businesses in setting up web pages, market the CAP sites to the community, provide technical support, etc. The addition of youth to CAP sites ensures that resources are available to assist Canadians in accessing the Internet, and assisting small-businesses to participate in e-commerce.
- **CAP sites are benefiting from the additional resources that helps them to better serve their community base.** The program serves a dual purpose. Not only does the program provide youth with employment opportunities, it also ensures that many CAP sites can operate and deliver a variety of services to its community. The program provides needed human resources to the CAP sites who rely on volunteers to deliver the program. The summer season is especially busy for most CAP sites, and the entry of skilled youth enable the sites to continue to effectively deliver the program at peak periods. Many of the services that are provided by the youth (e.g., web site development, Internet and computer training courses, etc.) are only offered when the CAP YI youth are present. There is also an element of the youth training the trainer, or in this case CAP site volunteers.
- **Meaningful job opportunities are made available within remote/rural communities.** The majority of CAP sites are located in rural and remote communities. The youth initiative program encourages youth, many who are away at university, to return during the summer to serve their community. Youth are able to acquire well paying jobs that provide relevant work experience in their rural/remote community rather than remaining in a larger urban center. There is also a positive economic impact on local businesses. There is an outreach element to the program, where youth are tasked with promoting the program. Approximately, 20% of the youth's time should be spent outside of the CAP site – dropping flyers, marketing the site, talking to businesses about e-commerce, etc. This ensures that the youth are involved with the community they are serving. Talking to local

businesses also ensures that small business are aware of services available at the CAP site, including web development.

4.2 Appropriateness of the CAP YI structure and delivery

- **Recently, service contracts with delivery agents have been replaced with contribution agreements.** As a result of an audit undertaken three years ago, Industry Canada has required that its programs move from service contracts to contribution agreements. During FY02/03 CAP YI followed through with this transition. Significant delays were experienced by the program; many attributed the delays to finalizing the wording of the contribution agreements, or in securing the signature of the delegated authority. As a result of these delays, the CAP YI program was not delivered until December 2002.

The shift from service contracts to contribution agreements does not appear to have had significant impacts on the delivery agents except for slight delays experienced by some agents in securing sign-off/approval signatures for the contribution agreements.

- **Some delivery agents receive matching funds that enable them to continue with the program even when Industry Canada funding is delayed.** These delivery agents are able to hire youth during the summer season, thus better meeting the needs of the CAP sites. The delivery agents that do not receive matching funds must wait for approval from Industry Canada prior to hiring youth. This is especially challenging for those CAP sites that require youth during the summer period. The challenge for these delivery agents is that rather than hiring youth and allocating the time over an extended period, which ensures that the CAP site is always able to deliver youth related services, they must allocate the youth hours over a concentrated timeframe which is not ideal for the CAP sites and its respective community.
- **Industry Canada has not been effective at rolling out the program in a timely manner.** In recent years, the program has experienced significant delays in awarding contracts to delivery agents. During the last fiscal year, the transition from service contracts to contribution agreements resulted in the program not being delivered until December. However, significant delays have also occurred in previous years, with delivery agents not receiving approval for funding until after the summer season has ended. The delays have hindered the ability of most delivery agents to deliver the program in an effective and efficient way. More specifically, the following has occurred as a result of funding delays:
 - *Delays in funding affect the credibility of the delivery agents tasked with delivering the program.* It is the delivery agents within the various provinces that are responsible for the delivery of the program. They are the body responsible for overseeing the selection of employers and youth, promoting the program, etc. The credibility of the delivery agents is hindered when they are unable to follow through with funding to the CAP sites in a timely manner. For instance, in April of last year, delivery agents were sending CAP sites their applications, however, they could not roll-out the program until December when funding was finally approved by Industry Canada. During this time the CAP sites, which require youth in order to better meet the needs of their community, would be calling the delivery agents to find out when the program would be rolled out. Most of the tentative deadlines provided by Industry Canada did not develop, and it was left to the delivery agents to deal with frustrated CAP sites.

- *Some delivery agents are considering no longer delivering the program.* The reputation/credibility of the delivery agents have suffered as a result of their inability to deliver the program in a timely manner. In fact, according to one delivery agent, Industry Canada has missed twelve deadlines regarding rolling out the program. The delivery agents are communicating Industry Canada deadlines to the CAP sites, and when they fail to materialize it is the delivery agents who appear unreliable. Consequently, some delivery agents are considering withdrawing from the program, rather than further damaging their reputation.
- *Many youth miss out on the opportunity to apply to the CAP YI program given its late roll-out.* Specifically for those provinces where matching funds are not available, delivery agents cannot promote the program until funding is approved by Industry Canada. Consequently, the CAP YI program is not promoted to the youth who are most ideal — university/college students seeking summer employment and who plan to return to school full-time. The pool of talent that is available at the time the CAP YI program is eventually rolled out is smaller as a result of many youth already having obtained employment.
- *Many CAP sites are unable to secure youth during the summer period.* The majority of CAP sites request youth for the summer period; typically their busiest time given the increase in tourists. Most CAP sites require the extra resources to deal with a greater demand for services. Unfortunately, many CAP sites have been unable to secure youth for the summer as the program was rolled out too late. Consequently, many of the services (i.e., informing community members about the potential of the Internet and providing basic training on the Internet and related information technologies) that would have been provided by youth will not be delivered as a result of lack of resources. Likewise, if the program is not delivered in the summer then remote communities are less able to attract returning youth who will have found employment in urban areas.
- **Delivery agents are successful at ensuring program awareness among CAP sites.** Branding has been difficult given the number of name changes — program has changed names three times in seven years. However, the delivery agents have been successful at ensuring that the CAP sites are made aware of the program. The youth component is well known in the CAP community as a result of the delivery agents.
- **The main tracking/monitoring tool has not been operational for 2 years.** Youth and delivery agents are expected to input their reports into Virtual Office, a web based monitoring and tracking tool. However, Virtual Office has not been operational for two years. Today, the site continues to be unreliable. As many delivery agents noted, this creates an image problem as the program is geared towards providing youth with technology related positions yet they are unable to submit their reports on-line. Likewise, delivery agents are unable to provide training to youth on how to use the tool, as it is rarely operational.
- **Youth exit data are unreliable.** As noted earlier, the youth exit data that Industry Canada maintains was corrupt for FY00/01, and the data for FY 99/00 and 01/02 required significant ‘cleaning’ as the database was not properly formatted.
- **Industry Canada is considered flexible in allowing delivery agents to interpret selection criteria.** Delivery agents are given a level of flexibility in interpreting selection criteria. For instance, the program does not permit a youth to be hired consecutively or have relatives currently employed at the CAP site. However, in rural/remote areas, where the supply of skilled youth may be limited, a CAP

site is permitted to engage youth who have already completed an internship or who have relatives currently working at the site.

- **Limited communication is provided by Industry Canada to delivery agents.** Delivery agents have noted that there is limited communication being received from Industry Canada regarding timelines, reasons for delays, program results, change in criteria, etc. Whatever communication is provided by Industry Canada is as a result of a specific information request by the delivery agent. Overall, many delivery agents mentioned their difficulty in getting responses to questions.
- **Industry Canada has limited awareness of what is happening in the field.** While delivery agents, in their quarterly reports, provide feedback and suggestions for improvement to Industry Canada, there has been no noticeable uptake of the information. It is only recently that Industry Canada has considered acquiring modules (i.e., train the trainer, curriculum, evaluation forms, certificates, etc.) that can be distributed and uniformly used by the delivery agents across Canada.

4.3 Results achieved by the CAP YI Program

Overall, it would appear that the CAP YI has been successful at meeting its objectives under the Connectedness Agenda and Youth Employment Strategy.

- **The CAP YI program is successfully providing youth with work experience that facilitates transition to the labour market.** In reviewing the data gathered from the youth exit surveys it becomes apparent that the CAP YI program has been effective in assisting youth participants in obtaining both general and specific work related skills. Specifically, many respondents had noted that the program has contributed to their acquiring Internet, technical and HTML/web page design related skills.

The program has also been credited with assisting those respondents who successfully found employment after their internship with finding their current job. Approximately two-thirds (67.9%) of S&T respondents and 56.4% of Student respondents indicated that the CAP YI program helped them find a job.

The program has been especially successful at providing meaningful work experience to youth in remote/rural communities. Many provinces are challenged with providing meaningful work experience to youth in rural/remote communities. There are typically fewer work opportunities in rural/remote areas over urban centers. The CAP YI program enables youth, away at school, to return home and acquire relevant work experience while providing services to their community.

- **Delivery agents are effectively delivering the program within their province.** The majority of delivery agents have succeeded in developing their own training materials, monitoring systems, forms, etc. The delivery agents have also been effective at delivering the program: sending out applications to CAP sites, screening applications, making recommendations, advertising program to youth, forwarding applications to CAP sites, etc.
- **CAP sites are provided with a dedicated resource.** Many CAP sites are in need of extra resources. The presence of a skilled youth ensures that the program is delivering needed services to the community. As noted earlier, many of the services that are provided by the youth (e.g., web site

development, Internet and computer training courses, etc.) are only offered when the CAP YI youth are present.

4.4 Suggested Improvements for the CAP YI Program

- **Timely process is required.** Many delivery agents have their hands tied until funds are approved from Industry Canada. Delivery agents have noted that contracts should be approved no later than April, thus providing them with sufficient time to market the program to employers, select employers, advertise to youth, select youth, etc. It is especially important for delivery agents to receive approval early on in the year, thus ensuring that they can provide youth with summer employment and CAP sites with human resources at the busiest time of the year.
 - **Delivery agents should meet to share lessons learned or best practices.** Since the inception of the CAP YI program, delivery agents had never met to share best practices or lessons learned. It is only recently that a meeting was organized. The forum is of value to delivery agents. There is general agreement that the various delivery agents are re-inventing the wheel, by each reproducing training materials, forms, etc. Sharing of these documents would be beneficial for all. There may also be some benefits in getting delivery agents to meet and work on a core curriculum or in developing on-line reporting mechanisms.
 - **More communication from Industry Canada to delivery agents.** Industry Canada should seek input from delivery agents regarding the program, and strive to achieve consensus on areas for improvement. Industry Canada should also provide timely information on the status of the program. For instance, the rural/urban component in the selection of CAP sites has been changed which has had significant impacts on some provinces that have seen their funding cut significantly. Communication regarding how the ratio is calculated, why the change in policy, etc. should be formally communicated to delivery agents. Likewise, some delivery agents would also like for Industry Canada to provide an official statement as to when the program will be rolled out so that this can be forwarded to CAP sites.
 - **Youth and Delivery Agent reports need to be reviewed.** As noted earlier, one of the key obstacles in this evaluation was the analysis of the data from the youth exit surveys. One of the key difficulties in analyzing the data was that the structure of the survey instrument permitted respondents to select more than one answer to questions where only one response should be allowed. Therefore, Virtual Office should be set up to permit only one response to questions where only one response is allowed. The survey should also include a question that identifies whether a youth falls under the S&T Stream or the Student Stream. This is important as initial analysis conducted by Industry Canada (presented in Annex 3 and 7 of the Terms of Reference) was incorrect as a result of using a series of questions to identify which stream a youth should be classified. Outdated questions are also being asked on the survey instrument. For instance, youth are asked whether they are registered with the Campus WorkLink, which is no longer operational.
6. **Option of longer work terms – 6 months rather than 12 weeks.** A few delivery agents mentioned the option of extending the length of the internship. This would be beneficial to youth who have more time to improve their skills, and also for CAP sites that have a dedicated resource for a longer period of time.